

7 SEPTEMBER 2021

PC6-21 | LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGIES

Summary

The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has recently launched a consultation into Local Nature Recovery Strategies and how to prepare for them. Local Nature Recovery Strategies are a new, England-wide system of spatial strategies that will establish priorities and map proposals for specific actions to drive nature's recovery and provide wider environmental benefits. The requirement for there to be Local Nature Recovery Strategies, what they are and how they should generally work will be established by the Environment Bill once it completes its current passage through Parliament.

The purpose of this consultation is to gather views on key questions that will help Government produce both the regulations and the guidance swiftly after the Environment Bill becomes law. The main consultation document can be downloaded [here](#). The consultation closes at DEFRA on 2 November 2021.

Context

Local Nature Recovery Strategies are a new system of spatial strategies for nature, which will cover the whole of England. They are established by clauses 100 to 104 of the Environment Bill and are designed as tools to drive more coordinated, practical and focussed action to help nature. Each Strategy will, for the area that it covers;

- agree priorities for nature's recovery,
- map the most valuable existing areas for nature
- map specific proposals for creating or improving habitat for nature and wider environmental goals.

The DEFRA Secretary of State will also appoint a "responsible authority" to lead production of each Strategy from the list of potential public bodies set out in clause 101 of the Bill. By and large they will be public bodies that will have a strong knowledge of the local area and established democratic mandates, ensuring the necessary legitimacy and status to lead a collaborative process with other local partner organisations.

This is a consultation about the preparation and implementation of Nature Recovery Strategies. We are already trying to achieve local council sector

representation on Local Nature Partnerships, in our lobbying over the Environment Bill.

NALC's current policy positions

NALC will probably be saying in its response that local councils can and should make a significant contribution to both the preparation and the implementation of these strategies.

NALC has been lobbying DEFRA and the government since January 2021 on the passage of the Environment Bill through parliament and NALC's main position on local nature recovery strategies is best evidenced by the below clause NALC drafted to ensure that the bill factored in the vital need for local councils to be consulted by responsible authorities when such strategies affecting their areas were being framed:

Partnerships for Local Nature Recovery Strategies

[New clause] 101 (7): The responsible authority for a local nature recovery strategy will consult / involve parish councils within its area in the preparation of that local nature recovery strategy.

[New clause] 101 (8): The responsible authority for a local nature recovery strategy will include representatives of parish councils within the same local nature recovery strategy area in any partnership arrangements to oversee monitoring and delivery of the local nature recovery strategy.

Explanatory note: Parish council representatives could be appointed to partnerships created to produce Local Nature Recovery Strategies by county associations of local councils - for the same partnership areas those local councils are located in. Such partnerships are created by local authorities responsible for creating a given local nature recovery strategy. Were this to be enacted, NALC would wish to see that the guidance, when published, on the local strategies, includes provision for parish councils' involvement.

NALC has signed up to the proposition that there is a climate emergency and will therefore, as a general principle, support moves and policies which help to mitigate it.

Consultation Questions

The main consultation questions NALC will be responding to in this consultation are as below and NALC seeks the views of county associations and member councils in response to these questions to help inform its own submission to DEFRA:

5. Which of the groups listed below do you consider essential for the preparation of a Local Nature Recovery Strategies?

- **Local authority(s) other than the “responsible authority”, where the Strategy covers more than one Local Authority area**
- **Local authorities adjacent to the Strategy areas.**
- **Local Nature Partnership(s), where active and geographically aligned**
- **Natural England**
- **The Environment Agency**
- **The Forestry Commission**
- **Other public bodies e.g. Highways England**
- **Environmental non-governmental organisations active in the Strategy area**
- **National Park Authority(s), where present in the Strategy area and if not the “responsible authority”**
- **Area of Outstanding National Beauty organisation(s), where present in the Strategy area**
- **Local Records Centre(s), where separate from any of the other groups listed**
- **Local farming, forestry and landowning groups**
- **Local Enterprise Partnerships**
- **Utilities providers, such as water companies**
- **Other local business representative bodies**
- **Individual landowners and land managers (including farmers, both landowners and tenants)**
- **Individual businesses**
- **Members of the public**
- **Don’t Know.**

6. Are there any organisations not listed above whose involvement you consider essential? [Yes/No/Don’t Know] If yes, which ones and why?

9. Are you aware of specific locally-held information that would make an important contribution to the preparation of Local Nature Recovery

Strategies that you do not believe would be made available without a requirement to do so? [Yes/No/Don't Know] If yes, what information should be included?

10. How do you think neighbouring Local Nature Recovery Strategy responsible authorities should be required to work together?

- **Required to inform neighbouring responsible authorities of their progress in preparing their Strategy**
- **Required to give information to neighbouring responsible authorities that would help them prepare their Strategy**
- **Required to collaborate when setting objectives for areas close to boundaries**
- **Left to local discretion**
- **Other [If other, please specify]**
- **Don't know**

11. Should draft Local Nature Recovery Strategies be subject to a local public consultation prior to publication? [Yes/No/Don't Know]

12. Should individual landowners or managers be able to decide that land they own or manage should not be identified by a Local Nature Recovery Strategy as an area that could become of particular importance for biodiversity? [Yes/No/Don't Know]

14. How prescriptive do you think regulations made under clause 101 should be in setting out how the responsible authority should work with local partners?

- **Setting broad principles only**
- **Setting broad principles and specific requirements on who to engage or how**
- **A standardised process of who to engage and how**
- **Don't know**

NALC would be interested to hear from county associations and local councils from any of the 5 pilot areas about their experiences in contributing to the pilot strategies. These areas were: Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Buckinghamshire Council, Cornwall Council, Northumberland County Council and Cumbria County Council.

Your evidence

Please email your responses to this consultation to chris.borg@nalc.gov.uk by 17.00 on Friday 15 October, 2021. County associations are asked to forward this briefing onto all member councils in their area.

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